

PEOPLE - WAKEFIELD

A TRIBUTE
TO RUTH
WAKEFIELD

No one worked as hard as Ruth Wakefield, but that was not the thing that a person remembered about Ruth. You remembered that she cared about what mattered in any cause (and they were legion) that she was working for, about the people she was working with, and always about you. Once she found it out, she never forgot your birthday. If you were sick, Ruth was the first one to come around with some strengthening delicacy from her incomparable kitchen, the one to help you quickly to the right doctor or hospital, the one to call up a week after you had recovered, just to be sure.

In the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, Ruth Wakefield became a key factor soon after the acquisition of the King Caesar House in 1965. Everything was needed then, from furnishings to funds; but most of all, willing hands to tackle the vast job of transforming a beautiful historic house into one of the finest small museums in New England.

Ruth went to work, involving other organizations and other people, always herself willing to do far more than her share, but expecting others to follow, which they did, inspired by her enthusiasm. She joined the executive board of the Society, where she never failed to attend meetings, and contributed a most persuasive point of view as representative of the Ladies' Committee, the supervisory group of the many-faceted ladies activities.

Ruth helped organize the original group of hostesses for the King Caesar House, and the hospitality committee for the evening lectures. She conceived the idea of the King Caesar Mornings, those popular and financially successful lectures. She worked hard on the important Period Restoration Committee, where her encyclopedic knowledge proved most valuable. She put together the first family chowder parties, and a number of expeditions to kindred museums. She aided and abetted her husband in the acquisitions committee, and in the membership committee personally brought in dozens of new names. She helped enormously upon acquisition of the Bradford House in the campaign to refurbish and restore the old house, corresponding constantly with Gershom Bradford in Washington, just to make sure we were following the wishes of the family.

When funds became necessary, Ruth came forward willingly. It was she who persuaded Richard Bourne to offer his talents at no cost to the Society in the highly successful auction of 1972, when she also led the collecting of the truly fine antiques which made the auction such a success. Two years later, she inspired similar enthusiasm in the rewarding barn

sale that replenished funds in that year.

Everywhere Ruth knew people. She could find speakers or donors, true; but also she could and did find people who needed help or encouragement, give them what they required, and never say a word about it. People trusted her and loved her, sometimes were a little afraid of her, for she gave so completely of herself that they could not always keep pace. Hers was a leadership of action and example, based on understanding and sympathy. She will be long remembered.

The Duxbury Rural & Historical Society has established the Ruth Wakefield Memorial Fund, to which anyone who knew or worked with Ruth Wakefield is welcome to contribute. Checks may be forwarded to the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, Box 176, Duxbury 02332, and may be credited to a specific purpose indicated by the donor, or to the general fund.

by Jack Post